STAR WARS GOING ROGUE ONE (AND IT'S GREAT) metroNEWS

Ottawa metro

Your essentia... WEEKEND, DECEM...ER 16-18, 2016 High -12°C/Low -18°C Feels like -30°C

IDEA FOR SPARKS STREET SPARKED

Heritage group studying possibility since 2001 now says, **It's time, Mr. Mayor**

metroNEWS

RECOMMENDATION

Library location at core of debate

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

City staff are recommending a site just west of Bronson, at 557 Wellington Street, for a new iconic central library that will be a partnership with Library and Archives Canada.

The total cost of the library is expected to be around $168 million, not including the potential cost of parking facilities. The city would be expected to fund $99 million of that cost.

Staff are hoping part of the city's portion of the costs could be covered by the sale of the current Metcalfe library, as well as infrastructure grants.

"We should be celebrating the fact that we could have an iconic, central library in the city," said board chair Coun. Tim Tierney, who added the close proximity to the Pimisi LRT station will improve access.

Somerset Coun. Catherine McKenney was less impressed, and said she doesn't believe the choice is located in the core or easily accessible by cycling and walking. "I'm not in the least bit surprised," she said. "It was the preferred site back in June of 2015 — the community knew it, we all knew it — and it was the preferred site today. I'm not sure how we can go back and tell the public that we listened to them," she said.

FOR WHAT TO DO THIS WEEKEND — AND NEW YEAR'S — WE GOT YOU | metroNEWS

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Canada has banned asbestos; read Metro's explainer on what that means for you. **Canada**

An example of a coach house, a secondary dwelling constructed on a property that already contains a house. COURTESY CITY OF OTTAWA

The opportunity in coach houses

HOUSING

Contractors hope buildings will expand into a big market

Construction of Ottawa's first coach house is underway, and builder Ottawa General Contractors is hoping the discrete form of infill represents a big market opportunity.

"We think that this could be a huge hit in Ottawa," says Fares Elsabbagh, president of Canadian General Contractors Group, which includes OGC.

City council passed its approval on coach houses back in October, allowing homeowners to construct small, self-contained accessory apartments that are detached from the primary dwelling, but on the same lot.

It includes several restrictions, including height limits, a maximum size set in scale to the original home and a minimum lot size. In order to build a coach house, you'll need a permit from the City of Ottawa.

The appeal of the smaller units is in a more discrete form of intensification. In asking for public feedback on coach houses a year ago, the city said the infill option would provide "opportunities to introduce more dwellings in established neighbourhoods while maintaining the character of those neighbourhoods," while also supporting the city's goal of providing a diverse housing supply.

In a blog post, associate lawyer David Reid of Brazeau Seller LLP's real estate department wrote that developers may want to consider the possibility of homeowners building coach houses when determining lot specifications in a new subdivision.

Elsabbagh says that with rising real estate prices, coach houses are appealing for several reasons, including affordable housing options for millennials and in-laws, or as an extra income property. The project OGC is building now is a 500-square-foot unit for a client to move into on her mother's property.

OGC builds coach houses at a rate of $250-300 per square foot, bringing the cost of most units below $200,000.

"When millennials get into the buying age, with the cheapest house right now going for $400,000, it's going to become unaffordable for them in the next decade," Elsabbagh says of coach houses' potential.

The company is looking at ways to bring costs down, however, including modular builds.

He adds that lenders are likely to be interested in financing coach-house construction, especially if it will be used as a revenue-generating property.

"Any time you can show some kind of income, that's a good thing, whether it's your personal income or an income suite."

OTTAWA BUSINESS JOURNAL

$200K

The price of a coach house built by OGC at $250-300 per square foot costs about **$200,000.**

CORRECTIONS

Ontario pledges $33M to hiring nurses, psychologists and jail staff

Ontario is hiring more correctional staff, including officers, nurses, psychologists and segregation managers in an attempt to address issues with solitary confinement and inmates with mental-health challenges.

The dedicated segregation managers will work at institutions with higher segregation rates to try to reduce the use of isolation and help inmates who have been in solitary transition back to the general population.

"This is a first step towards implementing dedicated segregation teams across the system," said Correctional Services Minister David Orazietti.

In total, the province is hiring 239 staff for its 26 adult correctional facilities, including 24 correctional officers, which are in addition to a previous commitment to hire 2,000 officers over the next three years. The hires also include correctional supervisors, nurses, mental-health nurses, psychologists, recreational staff, chaplains, librarians and administrators.

Thursday's announcement comes with a $33-million price tag, with about $14.8 million for capital work, such as retrofitting and repurposing common rooms, upgrading doors and repainting.

"I have to give credit where credit is due," said Ontario Public Service Employees Union president Smokey Thomas in a statement. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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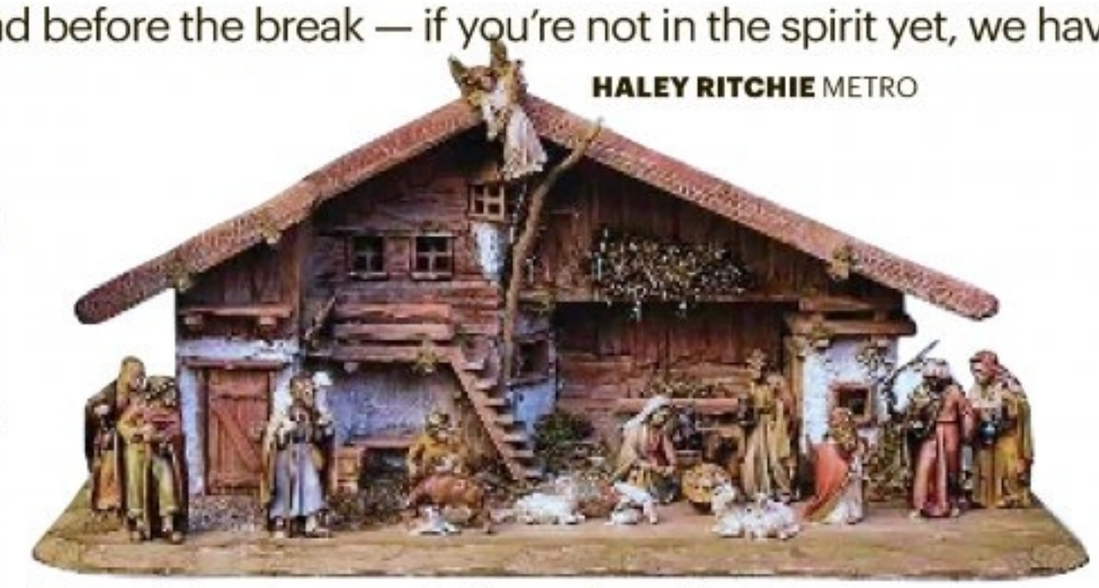
Five things to do this weekend

It's the last weekend before the break — if you're not in the spirit yet, we have some activities to get you there.

HALEY RITCHIE METRO

1 Elves of the Estate (Saturday)

Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Billings Estate National Historic Site will be welcoming little elves from across the city. Kids can dress up like elves, visit with Santa, enjoy milk and cookies and make secret gifts. Cost is $6.15 per person, $10.20 a pair or $16.35 a family.



2 Nativity Scenes (all weekend)

This weekend, catch the largest exhibition of miniature Nativity scenes in Ottawa inside Perry Hall, 81 Beechwood Avenue. From 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, over 430 small displays will be set up. There will also be traditional Colombian Christmas food for sale. Admission is $2.

3 Christmas in the Byward Market (all weekend)

It's the final weekend for Christmas in the Byward Market. That means on Saturday and Sunday you can finish your shopping while enjoying free wagon rides, hearing Christmas carollers and sipping hot beverages. Head to the corner of William and York to see choirs and sign up for a free wagon ride between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m.

4 Holiday Museum Crafts (all weekend)

The Bytown Museum will be hosting Ottawa-themed Christmas crafts on Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Find out what Christmas was like in historic Ottawa and create Christmas crackers to end the year with a bang. At the Canadian Museum of History on Sunday you can make an ornament to add to their enormous tree.

5 How The Grinch Spied on Christmas

Head to the Diefenbunker on Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for Grinch- and spy-themed activities, including crafts, coding and a scavenger hunt. There will be hot chocolate and treats and How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000) will screen at 1:30 p.m.

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Metro's picks to ring in 2017

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Five great events to key into for this year's bash

Trevor Greenway
Metro | Ottawa

It's that time of year again, when we ponder the past 12 months and dwell on our mistakes, cry over could-have-beens and make resolutions most of us can't keep.

Yes, New Year's Eve is fast approaching — but before you get ahead of yourself, there's still one day left to be your own self.

Here's our pick of the New Year's Eve parties, with a little something for everyone.

Monday I Retire, Blast From The Sun & Harea Band

Three of Ottawa's hottest up-and-coming bands are throwing one hell of a bash at one of the region's most fabled music venues, the Black Sheep Inn in Wakefield. Monday I Retire has been a force on the scene since dropping their new self-titled EP earlier this summer. Singer Mackenzie Di Millo's smoky croon will have you bouncing over the band's groovy signatures all night. Toss in some soulful indie rock with Harea Band and bluesy trio Blast from the Sun and you're going to need hangover pills. It's about to get loud in Wakefield. Starts at 9 p.m. and cover is $10 for early birds online and $20 at the door.

Beat the Clock: A NYE Event Babylon Nightclub

Ever wanted to smoothly swoon to Rod Stewart's Tonight's the Night and then get nasty to Drake's 0 to 100 real quick? Hop into DJ Devin Atherton's DeLorean and travel through time at Babylon, where the local selector and his co-DJ Jervy Jerv will be rinsing folks with an era an hour, all night. Starting with the 70s at 9 p.m. these selectors will school you on the good, the bad and the ugly — everything from Chic's Le Freak to Marvin Gaye's Let's Get It On. Every hour, the DJs will move up an era. That means you get a full hour of cheesy, bad 80s music at 10 p.m. Things will get Vanilla Icey around 11 when tunes from the 90s take over. If TLC's Waterfalls was your jam, better show up before the clock hits midnight.

We've got you covered on New Year's Eve. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The DJs will take you through the 2000s and into 2016 by 2 a.m. Bring your watch. Opens at 9 p.m. for $15.

GENESIS — OCR Academy Warehouse

Billed as "Ottawa's biggest New Year's Eve party," Genesis expects over 1,000 hungry EDM fans to invade the OCR Academy warehouse for an all-night dance party that won't stop dropping beats. Seven of the city's top DJs, including MAC, Paulo Cardosso, Luc DaDrifter, Space Cadets, Rick Laplante and headliners Return of the Jaded will run the gamut of genres from Top 40 and mashups to deep techno, house and tech house. The party will boast a balloon drop at midnight, laser light shows, free champagne toast and a whole lot of dancing. Dress to impress at this party. Starts at 8 p.m. for $50-$60.

Kitchen Party — NYE edn — 2017 Is Going To Be OK

If you're looking for something a bit more low key and underground, then Bar Robo is your place to be on New Year's Eve. Join DJs Hobo and Sweet Cheeks as they whip you into a funky frenzy of soul, disco, hip hop and house, while making stops at everything in between. Hobo and Sweet Cheeks are the two catalysts behind KITCHEN PARTY, one of Ottawa's coolest underground dance parties that have been a staple in the scene since 2011. These guys know how to throw a party, but they won't do much talking, it's all about the music. Cheap drinks and champagne and snacks at midnight. Bar Robo at 10 p.m. for $10.

New Year's Eve w/ The Tony D Band

What better way to regret the year you just had than with one of Ottawa's best bluesmen? The Rainbow Bistro has a spot at the bar for you to pull up a stool and drown your sorrows. Join the Tony D Band, one third of Ottawa's MonkeyJunk, as he rings in 2017 one blues scale at a time. The Rainbow Bistro is your spot to hear real blues, by real, local musicians. Those who don't make it will be singing the blues for all of 2017. Rainbow Bistro at 8:30 p.m. for $25.

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TRANSIT

Group pushes for streetcar on Sparks

With Mayor Jim Watson saying a light-rail line to Gatineau makes sense in the city's long-term future, one group would like him to consider an idea from the past.

In an interview with Metro earlier this week, Watson said that after the Confederation Line is completed and the Phase 2 project is built out, he would like to see a line extended to Kanata. But after those projects — likely well into the 2020s — he would like to see a line extended into Gatineau.

Hassan Eltaher was part of the Ottawa Heritage Streetcar committee, a largely inactive group that has been studying the idea of a streetcar running along Sparks Street since 2001.

Eltaher said they looked at the idea back then and determined a route running down Sparks from Confederation Square and into Tunney's Pasture was achievable in a first phase, with a second phase extending the line into Gatineau across the Prince of Wales Bridge, before returning on the Alexandria Bridge.

Eltaher said when they showcased the idea at public events, people were excited.

"Every time there was some kind of exhibition in town or social event we would have a table with a maquette of a streetcar," he said. "Everyone and their brother was enthusiastic about the idea."

Eltaher said the city and the mayor haven't shown any interest in the idea and he concedes it would move less people than an LRT system.

But he said he would like to see the idea formally considered.

"They could always give us reasons why they should not or tell us they have much better plans in the future and then we would be convinced."

He said a similar system in Istanbul has been a real draw.

RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

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Ottawa police are hoping to solve some of this year's **near-record number of homicides.** METRO FILE

Homicides task force

POLICE

New unit will investigate gang-related killings

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

Ottawa police are launching a new task force to look at gang-related murders, believing many of them are linked.

Police announced Thursday afternoon the task force would have members of the guns and gang unit and the street crime unit work alongside homicide investigators.

"They share the same group of suspects and group of people that are committing these types of crimes," Supt. Don Sweet said about the move. "You put them in the room and there is a certain community that allows the passing of the information to pass easier."

Sweet said while the officers would be pulled from existing assignments, the force could balance those moves and ongoing investigations would not suffer.

Ottawa has had 22 homicides so far this year, and of those, 10 remain unsolved.

Police said they believe in the case of gang-related homicides there may be links and retribution involved in these cases.

"It's not uncommon if you have a gang element that you have a repeat name pop up," he said. "We're confident that maybe if we get a break on one case it may seep into another case."

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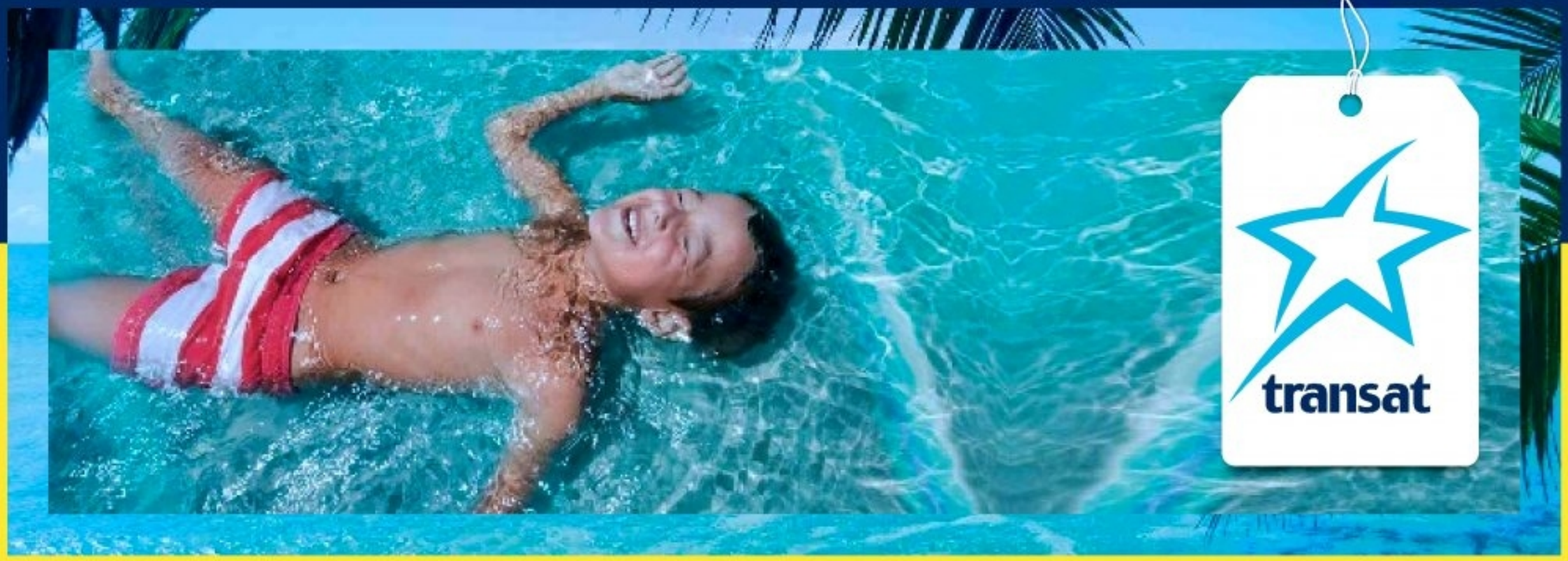

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Family believed dead in house fire

ONTARIO

First Nation community struggling with the loss

Fire officials attend the scene of a house fire on Oneida Nation of the Thames reserve on Thursday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A father, three young children and a baby are believed to have died in a fire that destroyed their home and ripped apart this First Nation community amid efforts Thursday to recover and identify the charred remains of the victims.

Shocked community leaders and residents struggled to come to terms with the devastating loss that occurred about 12 hours after a blaze in Port Colborne, Ont., also claimed the lives of four family members.

"We've only started to understand what has happened," Randall Phillips, chief of the Oneida Nation of the Thames, said Thursday. "Our community is suffering. There's not a person in this community that doesn't know one of the victims or the victims' family."

Relatives of the dead were in shock, and heart-broken, Phillips said, adding that a forensic anthropologist had only managed to identify the remains of the adult and one of the children.

A man who said he was a brother of the deceased father shooed photographers from the blackened frame of the house on the edge of the town as firefighters and investigators worked in the wreckage of the home.

Firefighters arriving on the scene in frigid temperatures at about 11 a.m. Wednesday could do little more than douse the flames, which took about two hours. The cause remained under investigation.

Phillips, who said the two-storey home was old and "just basically kindling," lashed out at the federal government for rejecting the community's plea for funding to upgrade 50 of its houses, saying First Nations housing is in crisis.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ayla Reznick with her dog Luna, who survived after being hit by a GO train in Toronto. EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

Lucky Luna survives being hit by a train

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Luna the dog is dog-gone lucky.

The precocious pup, an Australian shepherd-border collie mix, was hit by a GO train Dec. 7 in Toronto, Ont. Despite being pulled under the vehicle, she survived unscathed.

"It's a miracle," Luna's owner, Ayla Reznick, said. "I can't even imagine my life without Luna right now."

Luna slipped her leash while out for a walk in Parkdale. The dog walker tried to pursue her, Reznick said, but the pooch bolted.

Aided by members of the Lost and Found Pets of Ontario Facebook group, Reznick scoured the neighbourhood but didn't find Luna.

Luna eventually returned home on her own, and aside from a few mysterious scrapes and bruises, she was no worse for wear. She was given a clean bill of health from the vet the following day, Reznick said.

It wasn't until later that Reznick learned Luna's brief adventure nearly cost the dog her life.

A GO train operator named Jonathan Podzyhun reached out to her on Facebook, saying he was on board when the train hit a dog matching Luna's description. He was certain the dog had died.

"He was shocked and amazed that she was alright," Reznick said.

According to Reznick, Podzyhun told her the newer GO trains are a bit higher than older models, which could explain how Luna escaped harm. He also suspected a backpack the dog was wearing might have protected her.

METRO EXPLAINS

What the asbestos ban means

May Warren
Metro | Toronto

On Thursday the federal government announced a plan to ban manufacturing any products containing asbestos, and its import or export by 2018.

Metro breaks down the news and what it means for you.

What is it?

Asbestos refers to a group of minerals that, at its peak, was found in more than 3,000 applications around the world.

Why is it dangerous?

The World Health Organization declared asbestos a "human carcinogen" way back in 1987. Even small amounts of airborne asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer and a disease called asbestosis.

So there's a ban, yay us?

Canada is late to the game on the issue. Our last asbestos mine closed in 2011, but more than 50 nations have already banned the carcinogen. The government's move comes after decades of lobbying from labour groups, and people who have died or lost loved ones.

What else?

The government pledges to create new health and safety regulations to limit contact workers have with existing asbestos on the job, and expand the online list of buildings containing asbestos that it owns or rents.

Syrians who were evacuated from rebel-held neighbourhoods arrive in Khan al-Aassal region, in west Aleppo. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

East Aleppo's residents flee

Evacuation seals the fate of the rebellion's key stronghold

Weeping, hobbling on crutches or dragging suitcases, hundreds of survivors of a devastating government bombardment and siege left the last sliver of opposition-held Aleppo on Thursday, an evacuation that sealed the end of the rebellion's most important stronghold and was a watershed moment in Syria's five-year-old civil war.

A smiling President Bashar Assad called it a historic event comparable to the birth of Christ and the revelation of the Qur'an.

A UN official described it as "a black chapter in the history of international relations."

Under a surrender deal brokered by Russia and Turkey, tens of thousands of residents and rebel fighters are being evacuated to opposition-controlled areas in the surrounding countryside.

Eastern Aleppo rose in revolt against Assad in 2012 and battled since then with the western, government-held part of the city in one of the most horrific and destructive fronts of the civil war.

The rebels' hold in Syria's one-time commercial powerhouse was a major point of pride, and at times it seemed an invulnerable part of what was once a growing opposition-held patch of territory in the north.

But government forces finally surrounded eastern Aleppo and then battered it to pieces. The air and ground campaign by Syrian troops — backed by Russian warplanes and forces from Assad's regional allies — relentlessly wore away at the enclave.

Hundreds of civilians were killed, and tens of thousands fled to government-held areas. The pocket was reduced to a few blocks packed with the bloodied, exhausted and demoralized but also die-hard opposition forces.

"History is being made," an upbeat Assad proclaimed in a video. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VOICES OF THE DISPLACED

As they find safety, displaced residents from the devastated east of the city describe violence and food shortages to the UNHCR.

We had a house, but it was completely destroyed. It was very shocking to see our home turned to ruins. Bader, 12,

I am very scared of what the future might hold for us, and especially for my daughters.
Aziza, a single mother in her late thirties

We used to be given bags of bread, but then bread stopped and there was just rice. Then there was no rice and the prices of food became so expensive.
Mohammad, 16

SOURCE: UNHCR

RESEARCH

Global warming's prints on weird weather cases

A new scientific report finds man-made climate change played some role in two dozen extreme weather events last year but not in a few other weird weather instances around the world.

An annual report released Thursday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found climate change was a factor, however small or large, in 24 of 30 strange weather events. They include 11 cases of high heat, as well as unusual winter sunshine in the United Kingdom, Alaskan wildfires and odd "sunny day" flooding in Miami.

The study documented climate change-goosed weather in Alaska, Washington state, the southeastern United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, China, Japan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the western north Pacific cyclone region, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Ethiopia and southern Africa.

"It has to be measurable. It has to be detectable," said NOAA scientist Stephanie Herring, co-editor of the report.

> **It has to be measurable. It has to be detectable.**
> Stephanie Herring

In six cases — including cold snaps in the U.S. and downpours in Nigeria and India — the scientists could not detect climate change's effects. Other scientists, though, disputed that finding for the cold snap that hit the Northeast.

Herring highlighted the Miami flooding in September 2015. Because of rising sea levels and sinking land, extremely high tides flooded the streets with 22 inches of water.

"This one is just very remarkable because truly, not a cloud in the sky, and these types of tidal nuisance flooding events are clearly become more frequent," she said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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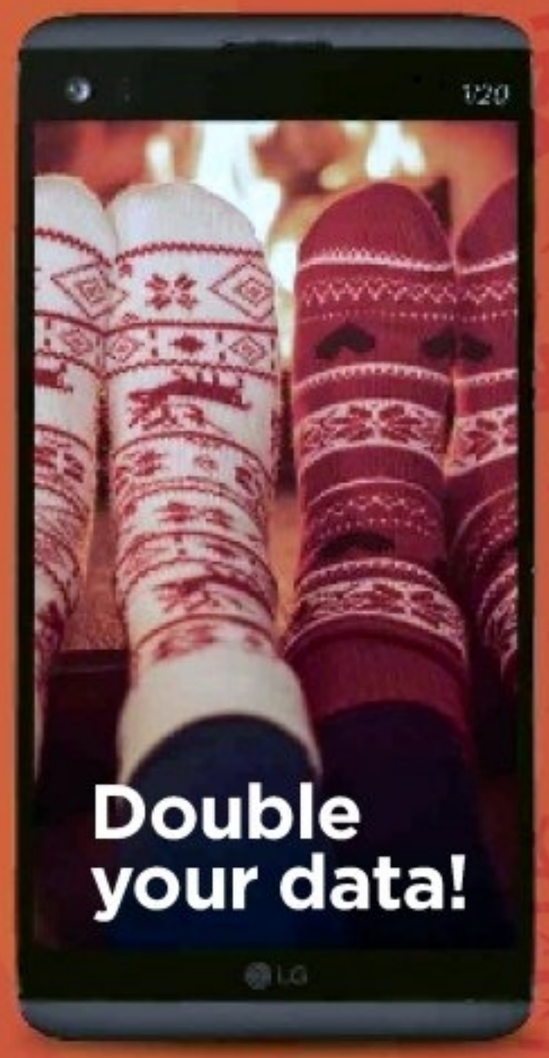

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We ignore dual realities at our peril

Rosemary Westwood relocates from Canada to the U.S. She chronicles her observations in a weekly column for Metro.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
From the U.S.

Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli performs in Budapest, Hungary on Nov. 5. Bocelli has been confirmed as a performer at president-elect Donald Trump's inauguration. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

For a minute there, it appeared as if the only star president-elect Donald Trump could scrounge up to sing at his inauguration was the runner-up in 2010's America's Got Talent, Jackie Evancho.

Not exactly in keeping with the Trump Hotel motto "Never Settle."

And it felt so right. Who could possibly want to serenade into power the most dangerous president elected in my lifetime? Who could want to sing those myth-making lyrics "land of the free" to a man in favour of voter suppression and media suppression, deporting an entire religion and jailing innocents, a man who takes his leadership cues from Vladimir Putin, who lies to his supporters in order to cement his own power?

The answer, it turns out, is Andrea Bocelli. I'll never hear that duet with Celine Dion the same way again.

It's still a bit gratifying to know that most of Hollywood, whose opinions I care little about otherwise, is MIA on this one.

Of course, Donald Trump's own celebrity has never really translated into widespread celebrity political love. (Aside from Kanye West's less-than-gushing support, Alec, the lesser of the Baldwins, and the actress from Clueless who wasn't Cher or Tai.)

But the lack of Hollywood support certainly didn't bother Trump's base, who seem to view celebrities (minus Trump himself) as de facto "elites" (a term now devoid of meaning, since it also appears to apply to every New Yorker, including nearly half of the city that's living in or near poverty).

Indeed, some might not care who sings about "the rockets' red glare" this time. What looks bad from where I'm sitting, clearly, looks completely different to someone who voted for Trump.

That acceptance comes with a few requirements.

The first is to remember that while I'm rolling my eyes at reports in the Daily Beast that Trump wanted Aretha Franklin to sing for him (Aretha?!), some of Trump's 46 per cent of the U.S. electorate are reading on Breitbart that President Obama's investigation into Russian hacking is just sour grapes after the Democrats lost the election.

There are two American realities, and we ignore the one we're not living in at our own peril.

Which brings us to the other requirement: Anyone outraged at the election results has some studying to do. Go read Fox News. Browse Red State. Click on a few Breitbart links. Even, God forbid, peruse Info Wars.

The day after the election, On The Media's Brooke Gladstone argued the radio show — which reports on the media — has a new goal: "To make what seems to have been invisible to us and everyone we know, visible."

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Slow Braised Pot Roast Puttanesca

Ingredients

- 3 to 4 lb (1 1/2 to 2kg) beef chuck roast, trimmed of excess fat
- Salt and freshly-ground pepper
- 3 (45ml) Tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup (250ml) dry red wine
- 1 cup (250) beef stock
- 530ml (550g) Authentica World Cuisine Puttanesca Sauce
- 2 onions, quartered
- 8 carrots, diced into 1-inch (2.5cm) cubes
- 2 celery sticks, 1/2-inch thick sliced
- 2 cups (500ml) button mushrooms
- 2 bay leaves

Instructions

Season the roast with salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the roast and sear on all sides until brown. Scatter the vegetables and add the bay leaves. Saute until the onions start to become translucent. Add the red wine, beef stock and the Puttanesca Sauce. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Simmer for 3 hours, basting every hour with the sauce, until the beef is fork tender.

Remove the roast, slice and arrange on a warm serving platter. Garnish with the vegetables. Serve with the sauce.

Serves 6 to 8

metro SCIENCE

Your essential daily news

No bones about it: Evolutionary biologists believe humans lack the penis bone our direct ancestors have because we spend less time having sex

DECODED by Genna Buck and Andrés Plana

DINOSAURS REALLY DID HAVE FEATHERS

A Chinese scientist browsing a market in Myanmar has stumbled onto **the find of the century.** What first appeared to be a fragment of a bird's tail suspended in 99-million-year old amber in fact belongs to a coelurosaur — a feathered, sparrow-sized dinosaur. **But what is amber and where does it get its enchanting ability to capture an ancient moment and freeze it in time?**

Amber starts out as sticky tree resin. Over many years, a series of chemical reactions turns hardened resin into glassy amber. Smelly, reactive chemicals, called volatiles, dissipate, and the rings of hydrogen and carbon that remain arrange themselves into long chains of molecules called polymers. Once the volatiles are gone and the **polymerization** is complete, the resin, sometimes with debris or dead critters trapped inside, is amber.

Fair feather find

Using microscopes and a CT scanner, scientists at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum were the first to ever see dinosaur feathers in glorious 3D. They're white and brown, and more delicately structured than modern bird feathers, lacking the strong central rod.

As a result, this dino probably couldn't fly: a clue feathers may have first evolved for a purpose other than flight. Unlike in birds, the tail's **vertebrae were not fused into one bone,** but segmented and able to bend in several places at once.

Who was this dinosaur?

A pocket-sized member of the T. rex's family, **coelurosauria**. It walked upright and feasted on insects.

Sorry, Jurassic Park fans, scientists are pretty sure **dino DNA can't survive in amber**. Earlier experiments that suggested this was possible seem to have picked up stray DNA from the lab.

FINDINGS
Your week in science

SUMUKHA J. N.

MAGIC MENAGERIE
Scientists have been known to give goofy names to genes (sonic hedgehog) and animals (Pieza kake). Now J.K. Rowling has given her seal of approval to another silly-sounding species: Eriovixia gryffindori, a spider that looks remarkably like the Hogwarts sorting hat.

SAD ZIKA STUDY
The most detailed study yet of pregnant women in Brazil with confirmed Zika virus has revealed a scary truth: more than half had a miscarriage, stillbirth, or baby with a devastating brain abnormality.

SOUND SMART

NOMEN CLATURE

DEFINITION
Nomenclature is a scientific system for naming and categorizing something, like chemical compounds, animals or time periods. Biologists use binomial nomenclature (genus and species in italics) for living things like *Homo sapiens*.

USE IT IN A SENTENCE
The international community should adopt formal **nomenclature** for Pokemon. Their names are cutesy and random; they don't provide any useful information.

CITIZEN SCIENTIST by Genna Buck

Why doesn't the sun fry the earth?

The sun injects a lot of energy into Earth, yet the temperature here is relatively stable. The Earth must be losing a similar amount of heat. How does that work? — Dexter

You're right. The Earth absorbs radiation from the sun and releases a similar amount out into space. But not exactly the same amount. And that's a problem.

Solar energy is constantly being soaked up and spat back out by the land and oceans. Some is reflected by clouds and bright surfaces like polar ice caps, and some is absorbed by the cosy blanket of **greenhouse gases** that surrounds our planet. They keep the atmosphere at an average of 14 C, warmer than it otherwise would be (-18 C, the temperature on the atmosphere-less moon).

All in all, our planet exists in a state of **energy balance**. I think of it as a bathtub with the plug pulled and the tap on: We experience a consistent, comfortable temperature level because solar energy is pouring in and draining out at the same rate. At least, that's what's supposed to happen.

You may have heard something about how we're pouring more and more greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane into the air by burning fossil fuels and raising animals.

These gases have atoms are loosely bound together, and when they heat up, they vibrate and move around. They release the energy as heat, which other greenhouse gases absorb. This continuous process of passing heat back and forth between molecules keeps more of the sun's energy close to the Earth, with familiar consequences: Rising mercury, rising oceans, and doomsday if we don't do anything about it.

This process, **the greenhouse effect**, is also the reason the ocean isn't frozen. It sure is harder to deny something is real when you learn the details of how it works.

Science Question?
Tweet @genna_buck

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That first flash of the Force...

IN FOCUS

A long time ago, in a galaxy not too far away, we were all wowed

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

February 3, 1959 and February 9, 1964. The day the music died and the date it was reborn on the Ed Sullivan Show, both days burned into the collective memories of pop culture fanatics everywhere.

But what about May 25, 1977?

If you were a teenager then chances are you felt the earth shift. It was the day Star Wars opened, kicking off a cultural phenomenon that continues to this day.

This weekend the universe George Lucas unleashed in 1977 grows to include Rogue One: A Star Wars Story. Much-anticipated, the movie is the first of the standalone Star Wars Anthology films and is expected to decimate the competition, Death Star style.

Expect line-ups and packed theatres — box office seers estimate it could pull in somewhere between $130 million to $150 million at the U.S. box office this week — but no matter how wild the weekend gets, nothing will match the pandemonium that greeted Star Wars in May, 1977.

To paint a picture of the first blush of Star Wars mania I asked my Facebookers what they remember about that moment a long time ago, in a galaxy (not so) far, far away...

"I remember being so in awe of that legendary opening scene with the giant spaceship coming into picture from the top and filling up the entire screen… oooo, aaaaah," wrote Glenda Fordham. "The audience gasped in unison."

"Upon leaving the theatre, with my little mind totally blown, I was interviewed by the news," recollected Lesley Mitchell-Clarke, "where I think that I said, 'Anything is now possible cinematically.' I was all of 19."

"My stepbrother, who was seven at the time, was dead set against seeing it," says Tina Cooper, "and then of course saw it at least 50 times and dressed in Star Wars gear and played with Star Wars toys every single day for the rest of his childhood."

"The line-up went right around the block and we ended up sitting in the front row of the balcony," recalled Chris Ball "I was mesmerized but dad was bored. Part way through I guess he decided he might as well get comfortable. He took his jacket off and in the process knocked his popcorn over the balcony railing. We got a stern lecture from the manager and almost got thrown out. Fast forward 20 years (1997) and I am now the manager of the same theatre and handing out those stern lectures."

"I was six," remembered Sue Edworthy. "My Dad took me to see it. I fell asleep halfway through. He took me to see it again. I fell asleep halfway through. The seventh time, I finally saw the whole thing. Clearly he had no problem seeing it again, and again, and again."

"It was the first film that I went to more than once in its initial run," said Adrian Gruff. "In the scene where the X-Wings enter the Death Star's trench, I disengaged from the screen just so I could watch everyone's heads do the sideways bob and twist that mine had done on first viewing.

"It was the first time that I had a true inkling as to the energy that religion refers to as 'God.'"

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story	★★★★
Collateral Beauty	★

HOW RATING WORKS
★★★★ SEE IT
★★★ WORTHWHILE
★★ UP TO YOU
★ SKIP IT

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story will give another new generation that trademark thrill of facing up to the Force for the very first time. CONTRIBUTED

INTERVIEW

Smith gets his way in timely tale of death, love and grief

Edward Norton, director David Frankel and Will Smith behind the scenes on the set of drama Collateral Beauty. BARRY WETCHER

Collateral Beauty had a long Hollywood history before director David Frankel came on board. Hugh Jackman was attached at one point and Rachel McAdams had been approached.

The long development came to an end when Will Smith signed on to play Howard Inlet, a charismatic advertising kingpin who becomes despondent after the death of his six-year-old daughter.

"When I came on it, it felt like it was written in stone," says Frankel. "Everybody loved the screenplay and we were going in three months and then people started whispering, 'I wish we could fix that.'

"Once the actors got involved, Professor Will Smith, Professor Edward Norton and Professor Kate Winslet, there was a lot more writing. Mostly condensing. Edward had this brilliant vision of the movie as a screwball comedy, which I think was really smart. Will always said, 'We have to make the first half of the movie as funny as possible so that we don't kill people.' We worked on that."

The changes continued into the shooting. In the story Howard spends his nights practising self-therapy, writing angry letters to the abstractions of Time, Love and Death demanding answers as to why his child was taken. In the original script he met the abstractions, personified by Jacob Latimore, Keira Knightley and Helen Mirren, in a different order.

"It was written where he first ran into Love, then Time then Death," says Frankel. "We shot them in the order, Death, Time, Love so as we were approaching Love Will and I were still arguing about whether Love should be first or last in the sequence.

"We had prepped for six months up to that moment thinking Love was first. He came to me the day before and said, 'I think Love should be last.' I fought him about it because I really thought that moment on the train when he confronts Death was the pivotal moment and then it rained and because of the weather (the shots) wouldn't have matched. The sequence wouldn't have made sense.

"Of course Will said, 'God works in mysterious ways.' But Will Smith got his way. Big surprise." RICHARD CROUSE/METRO

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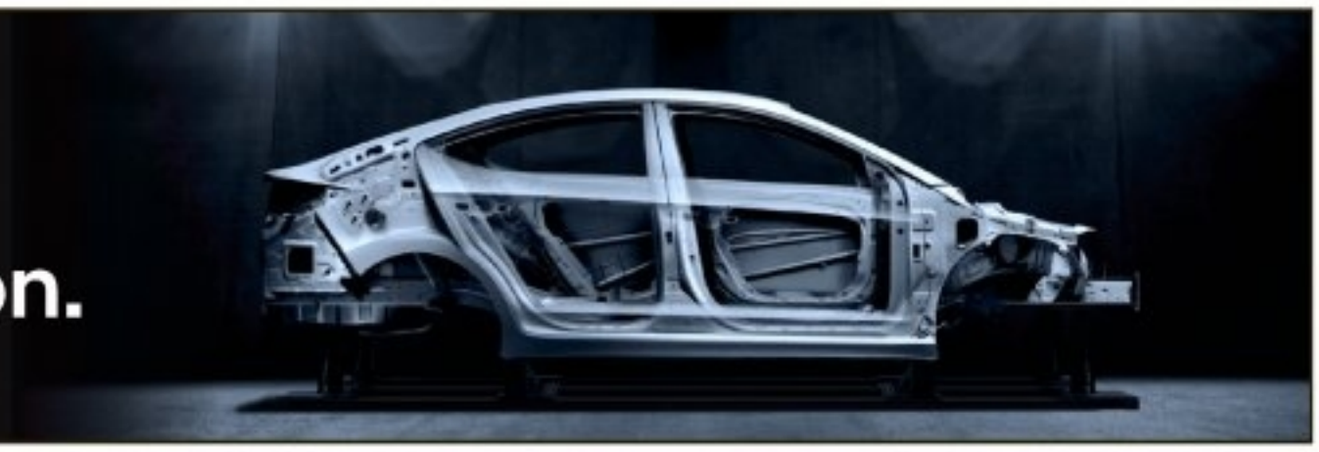


The galaxy's new recruit

In Rogue One: A Star Wars Story, British-Pakistani actor Riz Ahmed plays Bodhi Rook, a former Imperial pilot who takes his technical skills across to the Rebel Alliance. CONTRIBUTED

INTERVIEW

Riz Ahmed says he was a troublemaker on Star Wars set

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Like a lot of kids Riz Ahmed liked Star Wars. Unlike most kids he grew up to be part of the franchise, playing pilot Bodhi Rook in Rogue One: A Star Wars Story.

"I was a fan," says Ahmed, also known as Riz MC, who earlier this year starred in HBO's The Night Of. "I remember watching the films the first time round with my older brother. I was about six or seven years old. They were kind of my only memory of watching any movie at all. They left a massive impact on me. I remember running around with my brother for years, acting out our own weird sci-fi stories. Even though I didn't understand the storyline – I was too young – the level of imagination and detail that went into those movies.... It made an impression."

Yet, while the originals left an impression on the younger Ahmed, it was only when he joined the universe himself that he realized his level of fandom might not have been quite at the level he had thought.

"It's only now that I have met real Star Wars fans that I realize I wasn't really a fan," he says. "I thought I was. Star Wars fans are dedicated, loyal fans. I think the kind of vibe I've gotten so far is that they are really excited to see a film that both preserves the legacy and the inheritance of the Star Wars saga but is also something a little different, fresh, distinctive and separate from the other films. I think that can be a really tricky balance to achieve but I think they have really done that. "

Rogue One is the first standalone Star Wars Anthology film — upcoming movies in the expanded cinematic universe will focus on Han Solo and Boba Fett — and takes place after the formation of the Galactic Empire, shortly before the events of Episode IV: A New Hope.

The Rebel Alliance has recruited former criminal Jyn Erso (Felicity Jones) to collaborate with a team to retrieve the blueprints of the Death Star, the Empire's armoured battle station capable of destroying entire planets.

Ahmed plays a recruit, a former Imperial pilot with strong technical skills. Producer Kathleen Kennedy calls the character "a troublemaker."

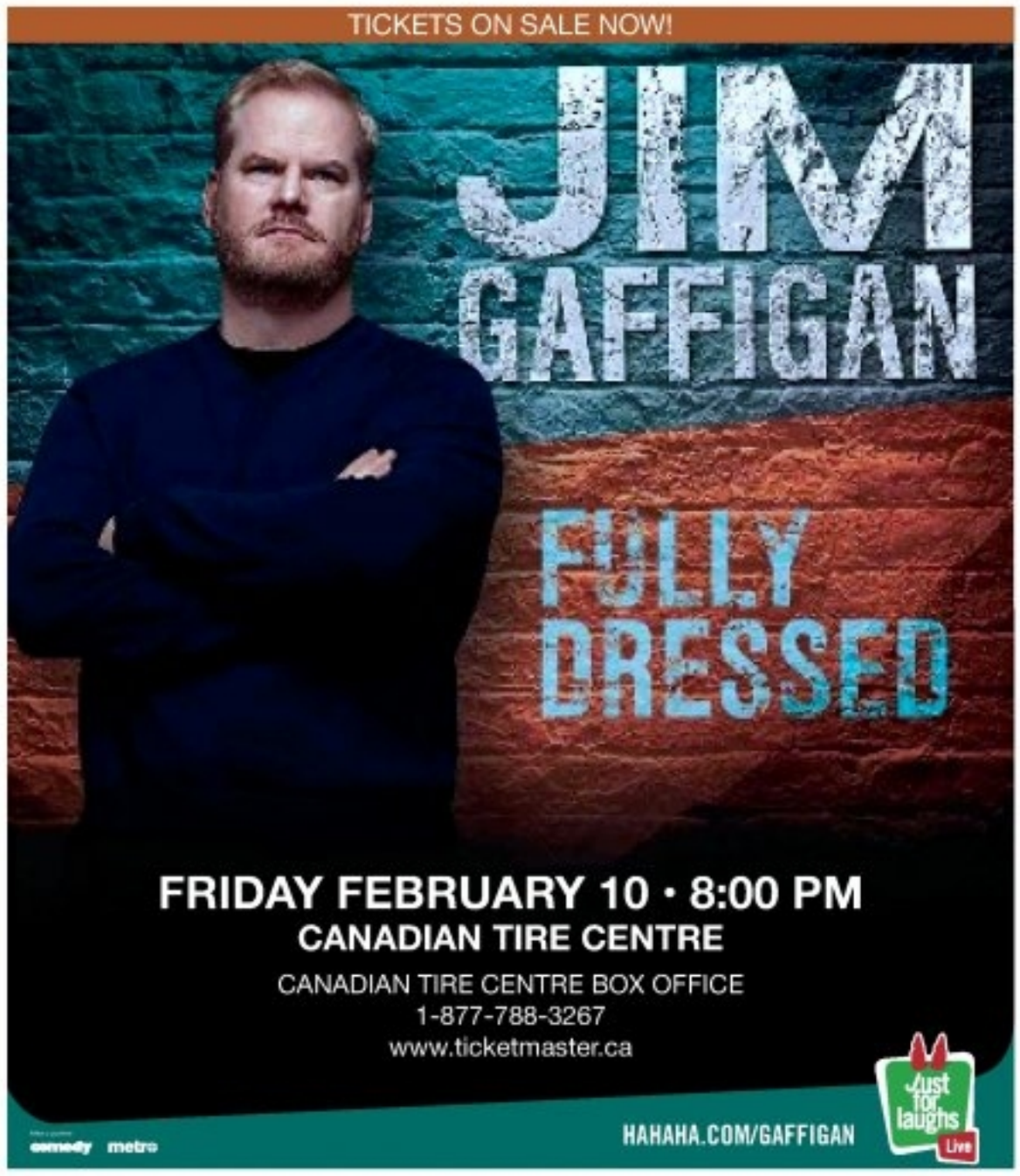
"It is interesting she calls Bodhi Rook a troublemaker," Ahmed laughs. "I sometimes wonder if she is talking about me on the film set. Bodhi is somebody who is thrust into a really unfamiliar set of circumstances. He is just an Imperial cargo pilot, an average Joe trying to earn a living. It is a company town he lives in, the occupied planet of Jedha, so he works for the Empire. He's really thrust into a new set of circumstances that force him to reconsider his allegiances and what he's doing in these turbulent times."

Working beside Ahmed are Diego Luna, Donnie Yen and Forest Whitaker, making Rogue One the most diverse of all the Star Wars films.

"I think it just makes sense that our film reflects the society around us," says the British Pakistani actor, "and also the audience watching the films. A story like Star Wars is a global story. It belongs to all of us.

"Audiences around the world are excited about Star Wars so it makes sense that when they think about who might be the best actors for these roles they cast their net really wide all around the world. 'Yeah, we'll have Ben Mendelsohn from Australia, Forest Whittaker from L.A. and Mads Mikkelsen from over here.' I'm lucky to have been caught up in this net as well."

> **It's only now that I have met real Star Wars fans that I realize I wasn't really a fan.**
> Riz Ahmed



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Join a cult

Not all iconic movies were box-office blockbusters when they were first released. Sometimes it takes a mixture of luck, patience, finding the right audience and big changes in the industry before a film really takes off. Here are four movies that earned cult status against all odds:

CONTRIBUTED BY HOLLYWOOD SUITE

The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975): Though the stage musical it was based on was a sensation, the movie flopped twice before it became part of the midnight movie craze of the late '70s. Midnight screenings, lax distribution rules, and audience participation went on to make it the longest-running release in film history.

And Now For Something Completely Different (1971): Independently financed by a Playboy executive who was certain Monty Python's Flying Circus could be repackaged for American audiences, this movie proved to be a dud on its initial release. However, once the Monty Python TV show was broadcast on PBS in its original format, the film was re-released to great financial and cultural success among fans eager for more.

Attack of the Killer Tomatoes (1978): This schlock horror parody recouped its modest budget, but was critically panned and didn't make any real box office waves. That is until younger audiences discovered the home video release. The film's second life on video-store shelves generated enough buzz to justify the filming of sequels a decade later, and videogame and cartoon spinoffs in the '90s.

Heavy Metal (1981): This Canadian classic had a respectable box office draw for an animated sci-fi fantasy film based on a counter-culture magazine, but that success was eclipsed by a soundtrack album full of massive '80s rock hits. The popularity of the soundtrack was nearly solely responsible for the film's cult status, since music licensing issues kept it from home video for over a decade, only allowing it to be seen occasionally on TV, or as a midnight movie in theatres.

Rediscover some of the most beloved cult films of all time. The Hollywood Suite Free Preview is on now until Jan. 5. Enjoy the best movies of the '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s uncut and commercial-free on four HDTV channels and On Demand, available on most TV providers.

See all these films on Hollywood Suite this month. Catch a cult film triple bill of And Now For Something Completely Different, Attack of the Killer Tomatoes and The Rocky Horror Picture Show, Dec. 17 on the Hollywood Suite '70s Movies channel and ring in the new year with Heavy Metal on the Hollywood Suite '80s Movies channel Dec. 31. Learn more at hollywoodsuite.ca/freepreview.

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Can Moonlight spark a black gay renaissance?

ANALYSIS

Coming-of-age story explores issue rarely seen in mainstream

Neil Armstrong
For Torstar News Service

Actor Ashton Sanders plays one of three stages of Chiron, the focus of Moonlight, Barry Jenkins' lauded coming-of-age story. CONTRIBUTED

The acclaimed drama Moonlight has become a leading awards contender this season, giving hope for diversity in the year after #OscarsSoWhite.

But the story it tells, of a young black man slowly coming to terms with his homosexuality, is one rarely seen in mainstream culture — until recently that is. On film, on television and onstage, there seems to be a sudden convergence of art forms telling the stories of black queer people, especially males.

Moonlight joins the similarly themed 2015 indie film Blackbird, plus the hip-hop drama Empire on Fox, which introduced a gay love interest for Jussie Smollett's character Jamal earlier this year, and the complicated, diverse LGBTQ characters of Orange Is the New Black.

Onstage in Toronto, black queer characters were front and centre in productions this year including Secrets of a Black Boy, How Black Mothers Say I Love You and, notably, in Black Boys, a "timely exploration of queer male blackness" that just ended a run at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre.

Are these productions part of a "black queer renaissance" as some have called it?

In an interview with the Los Angeles Times before Moonlight had its first public screening at the Telluride Film Festival, director Barry Jenkins said, "This movie was made for anybody who has ever felt other or like they can't be themselves and be accepted in society."

Compared to now, in the '90s such content was almost nonexistent.

There were exceptions, such as Jeffrey Wright's portrayal of the title artist in the 1996 movie Basquiat, and Queen Latifah's portrayal of a very proud lesbian in Set It Off.

And then there was Will Smith's intriguing yet problematic lead in the 1993 movie Six Degrees of Separation (played onstage by Courtney B. Vance).

At the time there was some controversy over Smith's portrayal of a gay character — a lying, promiscuous one at that — and what it might mean for his career. If anything, it helped.

Fast forward to now and Les Fabian Brathwaite of Out Magazine writes: "For the first time since perhaps the Harlem Renaissance, the souls of queer black folk have been depicted on our own terms as we take control of our narratives. . . This is the new renaissance."

Thomas Olajide, one of the stars of Black Boys, thinks it's a matter of serendipity to have a play he and his co-creators had been working on for four years come out at the same time that Moonlight is picking up award season buzz, including six Golden Globe nominations this week.

"It just seems like it's the climate for these stories to be unearthing very naturally," he says. "Perhaps we're all reaching a level of fatigue with not hearing those stories."

His co-star, Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, says "it's not just males but a lot of female queer people of colour (who) are really driving" the surge of such stories, at least on Toronto stages.

"Our communities have always existed," says playwright d'bi young anitafrika (She Mami Wata & The Pussy WitchHunt). "Whose visibility validates this idea of a renaissance?"

Having worked in the arts for 20 years, she notes, "What I can say is I do see a change in the visibility of black queerness in more dominant public spaces."

But Kimahli Powell, who directed Secrets of a Black Boy and sits on the board of the Inside Out LGBT Film Festival, says we shouldn't expect this supposed renaissance to continue.

"No doubt that Moonlight is a seminal work and its breakthrough is important," he says. "Yet when these moments happen — and they have in the past — we hope Hollywood has embraced storytelling and yet things remain the same.

"#OscarsSoWhite was just last year."

In terms of queer cinema, Powell notes people thought Brokeback Mountain would open doors for more movies representing LGBT people. That was a decade ago and little has changed.

"We definitely should celebrate that these stories happen to be shared at this moment but, unless there is a deeper shift in decision-making, we shouldn't expect more black queer art anytime soon."

"This movie was made for anybody who has ever felt other or like they can't be themselves and be accepted in society.
Barry Jenkins, Moonlight director

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Splurge or thrift for ideal gifts

Spend big or spend small, two shopping experts reveal their secrets to finding the perfect present for everyone on your list

Jacqueline Kovacs

A self-confessed holiday shopping splurger, Loukia Zigoumis, the Ottawa-based lifestyle blogger and shopping and travel expert on CTV Morning Live, starts her gift list in November. "I like to ask for ideas from the people I'm shopping for to narrow down my choices," said Zigoumis, "but I also love surprising my loved ones with unexpected gifts."

That often means gifts with big price tags. "There are definitely items I think you should splurge on," said Zigoumis, "sunglasses, handbags and electronics, as well as travel." But she adds that her splurge items are well thought out — key to not blowing the bank over the holidays. Here's how Zigoumis manages to be a big spender on a budget.

Lifestyle blogger Loukia Zigoumis. JON NICHOLLS

Style expert Karl Lohnes. AARON HARRIS

Shop early — really early

Don't think of the day after Christmas as Boxing Day. Think of it as the first day of holiday shopping for next year. As Zigoumis points out, you may groan now, but your wallet will thank you later. "After the holidays is a great time to shop for big-ticket items," she said, "whether it's designer goods or electronics as many items will be drastically reduced." Make a note of what you've bought in your personal calendar and then hide it in a spot that you won't forget, she adds.

Make it a long-term investment

Consider splashing out on one "main" gift and keeping any other peripheral gifts small, especially if you have older children. "My boys, now 11 and 8 years old, received iPads a couple of years ago as their main gift," said Zigoumis. "They were great investments as they use them for fun and when they travel. It makes sense to splurge on gifts for loved ones that you know they will love and will last a long time." For herself, Zigoumis says the one big-ticket gift she'd like would be a Louis Vuitton bag. "Designer handbags last forever and the price is easily justified because you know it's going to be used almost daily for years."

Take one for the team

Instead of individual gifts — and the associated shopping time — for each member of your family, consider a big group gift you'd all enjoy. "Perhaps you want to take your family on a tropical vacation during the winter," said Zigoumis. "Maybe everyone's gift can be the plane ticket in a beach bag, along with beach essentials." On the flip side, you could draw names and attach a big budget for the one gift you're getting for just one person.

The trappings of wealth

Even inexpensive gifts can put on pricey airs if the packaging is on the luxe side. "I am big on gift-wrapping presents nicely," said Zigoumis. "One of my favourite things to shop for is gift wrap, ribbons and bows." Those less than skilled at wrapping can take advantage of gift-wrap services within malls and department stores. No one even has to know.

If you want to buy brand-new, top-quality holiday gifts and decor, you'll need to take Karl Lohnes' approach — shop year-round. "In order to be a thrifty shopper of any sort, you have to be willing to shop out of season," said Lohnes, style expert with Toronto's CHUM FM radio.

Need a new artificial Christmas tree? Wait till mid-January. "You'll save at least 60 to 70 per cent of what you'd pay in November," said Lohnes. And the same applies to gifts. "Pick up a beautiful cashmere sweater for half price in February and put it away for next year for your loved one," he added.

Great advice, but what if like many of us, you've just realized that you haven't given a thought to holiday shopping? Fear not: Lohnes has thoughtful, creative gift ideas up his thrifty sleeve.

Go cheap or go home

Embrace your inner penny-pincher, encourage family or friends to do the same, and take on what Lohnes and his friends call "the cheapie challenge."

"You have to shop at a Value Village ... or a second-hand store," he explained, "and you have to find a gift for each person — but leave the price tag on to prove you paid so low." Then, go to town on the wrapping and await each big, cheap reveal.

"You open them up and go, 'An alabaster ashtray from the 1970s!' But actually, it's really cool and — oh my gosh, just $2.99!" At the end of the gathering, decide who was able to give a gift with the most style at the lowest price.

It's make or bake time

We all know people who are exception bakers, sewers and crafters — and what better way to give a thoughtful, affordable gift than to give something you've made?

"To bake somebody something can really mean so much to them — especially if they're not a baker," Lohnes said. "If they're not a knitter, make them a simple scarf. These days, we are all so busy, so it's a thoughtful thing to do."

A little experience goes a long way

Who says a gift has to be a physical object? Sometimes the most welcome present is providing someone your time and service. For example, Lohnes says, you could make a gift certificate offering to walk a loved one's dog for four Saturday mornings so they can sleep in. Or offer to help clean the house of an older parent or friend. Same with a promise to give a manicure or take them shopping — whatever service you know your loved one might need.

The point, says Lohnes, is to think differently about holiday presents."I think that gift-giving has become overwhelming for most people," he said. "There's so much choice and I think we need to put certain challenges into it — turn gifting into experiences. It doesn't mean that you're poor, but it's the idea that there's more thought put into it."

THIS SPECIAL REPORT WAS CREATED BY CONTENT SOLUTIONS, INDEPENDENT OF METRO EDITORIAL.

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Be a wine aficionado this season

Peter Rockwell

With more wines in the world than needles on a Christmas tree, choosing the perfect bottle for those on your holiday gift list can be a challenge.

To simplify your shopping here are 10 tasty wines that will appeal to everyone from the burgeoning aficionado whose just getting into wine to the trendiest person you know.

For the wine newbie

Anciano 2007 '7 Year Old' Tempranillo (Spain): Relaxed and ready-to-drink, this Spaniard is one of the oldest reds on store shelves that's still in everyone's price range. Classically labeled and encased in an old-school gold wire wrap, it's all about mature berry fruit which makes it a perfect out of the box selection for turkey dinners.
LCBO retail: $12.95

Inception 2015 Irresistible White (South Africa): With a Garden of Eden-themed label this white looks sexy and tastes pretty much along the same lines. Big on stone fruit and upfront tropical flavours, it ends surprisingly dry, making it an all-around people pleaser.
LCBO retail: $13.95

Apothic 2014 Inferno (USA): This latest "limited release" in the ever growing Apothic family spends two months in charred, white oak whiskey barrels before being bottled. Though the booze is upfront and personal in the berry-rich aroma and flavour, it mellows itself out when the wine is chilled in the fridge for 10-15 minutes.
LCBO retail: $16.95

For the white wine fan

Kim Crawford 2016 Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc Holiday Edition (New Zealand): For wine fans, Sauvignon Blanc is as synonymous with New Zealand as sheep and the All Blacks. Kim Crawford's version from Marlborough is arguably the quintessential example, with its gooseberry fruit and zippy acidity wrapped in gold for the holidays.
LCBO retail: $19.95

Marques de Casa Concha 2014 Chardonnay (Chile): No longer the popularity powerhouse it once was, Chardonnay still holds a place in many hearts, and is proudly served up on holiday tables. This balanced mix of bright fruit and massaging oak has "match with turkey" written all over the label.
LCBO retail: $19.95

For the red wine fan

Meiomi 2014 Pinot Noir (USA): One for those who love a fruit bomb that revels in its not-so-subtle, thick berry flavours. The grapes come from three different regions in California, combining to create a flowing fruit trail that tastes as good on its own as it will with poultry and ham.
LCBO retail: $26.95

Fontanafredda 2011 Barolo DOCG (Italy): While Piedmont may lack Tuscany's sex appeal, its juice, especially what's squeezed from the vineyards around the village of Barolo, are considered wine royalty. Brooding and rustic with layers of Old World personality, Fontanafredda's Barolo is a great introduction to liquid aristocracy.
LCBO retail: $29.95

For the fizz fan

Santa Margherita Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG (Italy): Prosecco is so red hot it has made sparkling wine cool. Best known for its sublime Pinot Grigio, Santa Margherita's spin on this northern Italian sparkler is all about accessible drinkability highlighted by apple and peach aromas and a zesty citrus flavour trail.
LCBO retail: $18.95

Veuve Clicquot Brut Champagne (France): Orange in label and classic in champagne goodness, this Pinot Noir-based bubbly loves to get decked out for the season. This year, it's housed in an arrow tin indicating the distance to Champagne from 29 locations. Look for Montréal; it's the only Canadian city with a shout-out.
LCBO retail: $70.60

For the hipster

Gonzalez Byass Tio Pepe Extra Dry Fino Sherry (Spain): Everything old is new again and sherry, long the tipple of "mature" drinkers, is having a bit of a moment with both mixologists and millennial-aged wine aficionados. Bone dry and best served cold, this fino is surprising food-friendly and will stay fresh for over a week if refrigerated.
LCBO retail: $17.95

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all locations.

Tasteful gifts for foodies in your life

GOOD EATING

That perfect something for the home chefs on that gift list

Vicky Sanderson

Sure it's better to give to than to receive. It's also true that splurging on a gift for your favourite home cook could be an investment in good eating. Here are a few items that might serve the amateur chef and gift-giver equally well.

Blenders don't always get the respect they deserve as small-footprint appliances that do everything from blend soups to make mayonnaise to chop nuts and herbs.

Chefs, who are also connoisseurs of mid-century or small-space design, might like one from Smeg, the Italian manufacturer of compact, curved countertop appliances in a rainbow of colours. A Smeg blender, in a cheery seasonal red, is available at Lowe's, lowes.ca, for $349.

Brand new this year is Panasonic's Countertop Induction Oven, which uses induction and infrared heating to create what has been described as a toaster oven on steroids. There's almost no preheat time; in minutes, it's up to 450°F. That's hot enough to grill whole fish quickly with a crisp skin and flaky, moist interior. A one-pan chicken and veg meal can be done in about 20 minutes.

The non-stick pan that must be used with it is dishwasher safe, and each unit comes with a cookbook of recipes developed by the Culinary Institute of America. Available at major retailers and on Panasonic's eStore, the manufacturer's suggested price is $700.

Home chefs who already love Le Creuset's line of enameled cast-iron wear might covet the Dutch Oven in a zippy Tartan pattern exclusive to Williams Sonoma, williams-sonoma.com, for $550. Purists who insist on solids will be better pleased with exclusive grey, white or dark blue options. (Psst: A more affordable idea is a simple cast iron pan, a favourite of many chefs. Walmart sells a Lodge 6.5-inch pan for $1.)

Fresh herbs take any dish from average to outstanding. They are much easier to incorporate if the kitchen includes a unit from AeroGarden, which makes economically-sized indoor garden kits with full-spectrum grow lights and hydroponic, soil-free containers. Recent sale prices at aerogarden.com began at about $100.

The slow cooker has long been loved by home cooks. It's perfect for anything that benefits from lengthy cooking at low temperature, such as stews, stocks and cheaper cuts of meat. It also does soups, yogurt, pudding, grain dishes, and jams.

There are lots of versions of this versatile cookware, but the granddaddy of them all, CrockPot, has a clever new design twist. The Multi CrockPot comes with a 2.5- split, a four-, and a six- quart crock. When not in use, they nest for compact storage. About $100 from Bed Bath & Beyond, bedbathandbeyond.ca.

Le Creuset's Dutch Oven in Tartan. LE CREUSET

A vacuum packer is a very efficient way to preserve food. So a chef can buy larger amounts of perishable foods, such as cheese, when it's on sale and/or available and use it reliably for a couple of months to come. It also seals make-ahead meals for road or camping trips, and busy weeknights.

Hamilton Beach has come out with NutriFresh, a vacuum sealer with settings for moist, dry and delicate foods, which are sealed in bags made of refillable, BPA-free plastic rolls. About $130 at multiple retailers and online at hamiltonbeach.ca.

Adventurous chefs will want to try the sealer to cook sous-vide, in which vacuum-sealed food cooks under gently circulating water at very low, very precise temperatures for a very long time — 24 hours or more. The advantages are virtually no volume loss, and excellent texture; the long, slow cooking apparently also makes magic out of tougher cuts of meat.

To do it, the cook will also need something like the Nomiku immersion circulator. About the size of a hand blender, it clips on to any pot, and handles the temp and circulation. It sells for $549 from Nella, nellaonline.com. Look for other, perhaps less expensive brands, at Amazon.ca.

Good knives are the foundation to a functioning kitchen. Knife nerds would be delighted to receive the Güde Chef's Knife from Lee Valley Tools, leevalley.com.

Güde Chef's Knife. LEE VALLEY TOOLS

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Learn a thing or two on teacher gifts

CLASS IN SESSION

Here are some bright ideas straight from the source

Astrid Van Den Broek

When it comes to giving teachers memorable gifts for the holidays, you know the cranberry-and-cinnamon-scented candle you gave your child's Grade 2 teacher probably didn't make her list of favourite gifts ever.

So what do teachers prefer to receive? Any hints on how to pick the perfect gift for your child's equally perfect teacher? Here are four to give us the scoop on their favourite presents.

PICTURE FRAME, MARSHALLS

Alyssa Greenberg
Grade 7/8 French Immersion teacher
École Stanley Knowles School, Winnipeg

"One of my students once presented me with a concert ticket for an artist we both really liked," said Greenberg. "The card included a message from her indicating that she had the other ticket and really wanted to enjoy the concert with me. Though it was a bit unconventional — I don't know many students who want to hang out with their teachers outside of school — this was really a memorable experience for me."

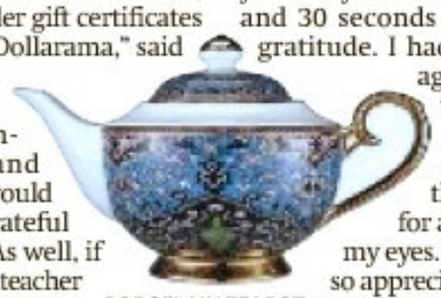
Gift giving cheat sheet: "It's always nice for students to notice teacher's interests and choose a gift card that would suit their needs," said Greenberg. For example, Greenberg's students have picked up the fact that she's a baker (she often bakes for her students at Christmas). "So I've often received baking supplies and small kitchen gadgets that have been put to good use."

CORKCICLE TUMBLER – COPPER, INDIGO.CA

Heather Webb Makin
Teacher/Librarian
Eastview Public School, Toronto

"As crazy as it sounds, one of the best and unexpected gifts was a cocktail blender. I was teaching Kindergarten at the time and there were just some days I could have used it during the school year," said Webb Makin. "I now use it for cocktails in the summer, as well as smoothies throughout the school year. I totally didn't know I needed one until I got it."

Gift giving cheat sheet: "Most teachers, as you know, buy a ton of supplies for their own classrooms, maybe consider gift certificates at Staples or Dollarama," said Webb Makin. "These would be used immediately and the teacher would be forever grateful for that gift. As well, if you know the teacher has a class iPad or Android device to use in the classroom, a gift card to buy an app would not only help the teacher, but most likely your child in the long run."



PORCELAIN TEAPOT, HOMESENSE

Jennifer Sepetdjian
Grade 2 teacher
On a teaching exchange at Glendal Primary School, Glen Waverley, Australia

"When I left my fabulous Grade 1 class in Canada back in December 2015, I got the best gift," said Sepetdjian.

BUFFALO PLAID SCARF, WINNERS

"The class parents and students put together a video of the kids answering questions about me and passing on some wise advice for my year away. It was eight minutes and 30 seconds of complete gratitude. I had to watch it again at home that night as I had missed so much of it that afternoon for all the tears in my eyes. I've never felt so appreciated in my 16 years of teaching."

Miranda Tonery
Grade 9 teacher
St. Francis of Assisi Middle School, Red Deer, Alta.

"The best gifts have been the ones that came from the heart. There was a parent who was very creative, and she made Christmas balls with the initials of every member of the family each on their own ornament," said Tonery.

"I also had student paint a silhouette picture of my family in a sunset on a canvas."

Gift giving cheat sheet: "I suggest parents get their child to choose what to purchase. Those kids know that Mrs. A loves coffee, that Ms. J loves to travel or that Mr. D loves to garden and they will be so excited to present the gift to their teacher," said Sepetdjian. "If not, something from a local restaurant, gift card to a shopping centre, tickets to the movies, books for the class, time at the "pick an item and paint it" kind of shop and there isn't anything wrong with the LCBO (liquor store)!"

Gift giving cheat sheet: "The best gifts have been the ones that came from the heart. However, large group gifts of a spa day is always nice as well."

GIFT IDEAS

1. Desk Set
HomeSense, $24.99
2. Buffalo Plaid Scarf
Winners, $24.99
3. L'Occitane Shea Butter Ultra Rich Body Lotion
Amazon.ca, $39
4. Metal Lunch Tins
HomeSense, $14.99 each
5. Tree Line Photo Pillow Cover
Indigo, Indigo.ca, $39.50
6. Corkcicle Tumbler – Copper
Indigo, Indigo.ca, $38
7. S'well Marble 17oz Insulated Water bottle
Indigo, Indigo.ca, $45
8. Picture Frame
Marshalls, $12.99
9. Superman 1,000 Piece Jigsaw Puzzle
Marshalls, $9.99
10. Porcelain Teapot
HomeSense, $19.99
*Prices may vary

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It's time to spoil your furry friends

PAW-PULAR IDEAS

Pets know it's the holidays, so don't forget their presents

Ylva Van Buuren

Have a four-legged friend on your gift list this year? While the usual chew toys would be well received, why not use the holidays as an excuse to get something different, fun, and functional. Here's a 2016 gift guide for pets.

Wrap up the **Sniffany & Co Small Box Squeak Toy**. The plush turquoise and white dog toy has got its own bow and a squeaker for hours of stylish fun. *$24 at Shop Overstock Canada; shopoverstockcanada.ca.*

If your cat is a wanderer, use the **Nuzzle GPS Collar**. The pet tracking device uses GPS and includes a free Nuzzle app (no monthly or annual subscription fees either) that alerts you of location. The collar also provides access to emergency contacts and medical history records. The waterproof collar weighs just one ounce and is available in orange and purple. (Dogs can wear one too). *$189 at Hellonuzzle.com.*

Show you care with a glass **Magnet Set**. *$6.99 at HomeSense. Visit homesense.ca for store locator.*

Use the festive 10-foot **Retractable Leash** to take your best friend for a walk this holiday season. *$12.99 at Winners. Visit winners.ca for store locator.*

Fill the **Silhouette Treat Jar** with dog treats, and wrap it up for your best friend. *$19.97 at Walmart; walmart.ca.*

Amuse and exercise your cat with the **Smartykat Feather Whirl Electronic Toy.** The spinning feathers and unpredictable movements will keep Miss Kitty on her toes. $14.97 at *Walmart; walmart.ca.*

WOOF and MEOW Expression Frames are 4"x6" with matte black finish frames with silver-embossed words and an easel back. Wipe clean with a soft dry cloth. $19.50/ each at Indigo stores, Indigo.ca.

Personalize this 9" x 16" **Customizable Stocking** with a favourite picture, cherished quote and your dog's name! It's made from red and green plaid polyester, has a sturdy loop for hanging, and is machine-washable. *$40.25 at zazzle.ca.*

DanaZoo Crimson Bone **Stay-on Mat with Bowls** uses magnetic technology to help stop bowls from sloshing around while the dog eats and drinks — and making a mess. The 18" x 11" mat wipes clean, and bowls are dishwasher safe. *$24.99 at Sears.ca.*

Use the microfiber **Wet Pet Mat** to help keep floors clean when your pet comes in with wet or dirty paws. The 20" x 31" mat soaks up to seven times its weight in water and mud. A silicone undercoating eliminates skidding. The DanaZoo Wet Pet Mat costs *$21.99 at Sears.ca.*

The Umbra Fishhotel is an ultra modern fish bowl with glass inner bowl that is removable for cleaning with a white plastic outer shell. The 7½" x 7½" 'fish bowls' can be stacked to create a hotel effect. US*$40 from umbra.com.* Here's a great way to exercise — for you and your dog.

The **FitBark Wireless Dog Activity Monitor** tracks your dog's activity and health. The light weight monitor is eight grams and fits dogs of any size. It comes with rechargeable batteries, free apps and no monthly fees, in five different colours. *$129.95 at Indigo stores, Indigo.ca.*

Put a bow on this adorable **Bavarian Catnip Filled Owl.** The spelt filling provides a natural cushion, and guarantees lots of fun. No glue is used in the toy, just stitching. *$12.99 at Pet Value stores; petvalu.com.*

Product prices may vary.

Gear up: New gaming hardware is here

NEW MACHINES

From next-generation consoles to virtual reality, amp up your entertainment

Marc Saltzman

Are you looking to get your game on in 2017? Get your thumbs ready. New versions of popular video game consoles are now available, not to mention cutting-edge virtual reality (VR) headsets to drop you "in" the game.

Expect these hardware platforms to be hot sellers over the holidays as more and more games are playable on them.

Here's a look at what's new and newsworthy.

PS4 Pro

Available for $499.99, the new and improved PlayStation 4 (PS4) console trumps its three-year-old predecessor. For one, it now supports 4K TVs — those new televisions with four times the resolution of 1080p HD — and offers HDR ("high dynamic range"), which reproduces a wider range of brightness levels, richer colours, and higher contrast levels. Even older games are now "upscaled" to deliver more breathtakingly detailed graphics. And PS4 Pro also supports apps including Netflix and YouTube, both of which can display 4K video. This new black box also offers a faster processor for faster and smoother frame rates in your games, and the hard drive has doubled, from 500 gigabytes to 1 terabyte, so it can hold more content.

Xbox One S

Xbox has also undergone a significant makeover. Xbox One S — the "S" stands for "Slim" — is smallest and most compact Xbox yet, and also works well with new 4K TVs. In fact, along with supporting 4K games and streaming video services, Xbox One S can also play 4K Blu-ray discs, as well as regular Blu-rays and DVDs (PlayStation 4 Pro plays Blu-ray discs and DVDs, but not 4K discs). You also get 2 terabytes of storage for the price. With a starting price of $379 (500GB version), Xbox One S offers backward compatibility, therefore you can play a growing number of older Xbox 360 games at no additional cost.

HTC Vive

The most comprehensive solution for virtual reality buffs, HTC Vive ($1149.99) ships with a comfortable VR headset with twin high-resolution screens, and a built-in camera for when you need to see around you; two room-scale base stations that track your movement in a 3-D play space (no, you don't just sit down with HTC Vive); and two wireless controllers that let you interface with content. Speaking of content, the Valve VR store now has more than 700 PC downloads supported by HTC Vive, plus you get two games for free: a fantasy adventure called The Gallery: Call of the Starseed, and the fast and frantic, Zombie Training Simulator.

Oculus Rift

Purchased by Facebook for $2 billion dollars — yes, billion with a "b" — Oculus Rift ($849) also plugs into a compatible personal computer, like HTC Vive, and delivers an immersive 360-degree experience with VR games, movies, educational software, and more — including many exclusive titles you won't find anywhere else. Packed up with the headset is a Xbox One controller, but Oculus Touch is now available, for $279.99 for the pair, for a more engaging interactive entertainment experience. One of the dozens of launch titles for Oculus Rift, Farlands lets gamers explore an uncharted planet and discover new forms of life (including insects, fish and plants), while Lucky's Tale, included, is a fun platforming adventure.

PlayStation VR

Debuting in October, PlayStation VR ($549.99) works exclusively with the PlayStation 4 video game console for your TV. Set-up is a breeze, as you simply plug the gear into the PS4, mount the PlayStation Camera ($74.99) just below or above the television, and don the head mounted display (HMD) and earbuds, to be transported to virtual worlds. With a strong focus on gaming, PlayStation VR launched with a lineup of 30 games, including exclusive titles such as Batman: Arkham VR, PlayStation Worlds, Rez Infinite, DRIVECLUB VR and RIGS Mechanized Combat League.

Samsung Gear VR

Another player is the newly refreshed Samsung Gear VR ($139.99), which requires one of six compatible Samsung smartphones to experience virtual reality, by popping the phone inside the headset. Supported devices include Samsung Galaxy S6, S6 edge, S6 edge+, Galaxy Note5, Galaxy S7, and Galaxy S7 edge. After you insert your phone, you can run games and apps by touching a small trackpad and buttons on the right of the headset or via an optional Bluetooth controller, if you like.

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: XBOX ONE S; SAMSUNG GEAR VR; HTC VIVE; PLAYSTATION VR; OCULUS RIFT; PS4 PRO

Get your game on with these picks

Marc Saltzman

Whether you're into sci-fi shooters, role-playing games, sports simulations or head-scratching puzzlers, 2016 served up a ton of selection and quality for the discerning gamer.

In fact, therein lies the problem: With so many games released each year — for consoles, computers and handheld devices — it can be tricky to know what to buy. If you need some suggestions, the following are some top games of the year, divided into kids, teens and adults, costing $69.99 apiece unless otherwise specified.

Kids

• Hit the ice with **EA Sports' NHL 17** (PlayStation 4, Xbox One), a fun and frantic hockey sim that delivers the goods. Along with playing as or against your favourite NHL team, this disc or download offers more accessible and responsive skating and shooting controls, smarter goaltending, new modes (Draft Champions and World Cup of Hockey), a deep progression system, new animations and stadium art, and better commentary to get you pumped up while you play. NHL 17 is also the most customizable game to date, and features dozens of thrilling new goal celebrations.

Teens

• Who said all first-person shooters need to be super violent? Rated "Teen," Blizzard's colourful and cartoon-like **Overwatch** (PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows PC) pits two teams against one another in fast-paced, objective-based matches in the future. Featuring a roster of diverse characters — including soldiers, scientists, and adventurers — your team will unleash extraordinary powers, traverse the globe, and even speed up and slow down time. Use strategy, tactics and reflexes to survive the fight.

Adults

• Exclusively available for PlayStation 4, **Naughty Dog's Uncharted 4: A Thief's End** once again stars treasure hunter Nathan Drake — and other returning characters — in a large-scale, third-person and action-heavy adventure. Along with tight and responsive controls,

Top: EA Sports' NHL 17. Bottom: Naughty Dog's Uncharted. CONTRIBUTED

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metro TRAVEL

Your essential daily news

Pitbull releases details of his $1M U.S. deal with Visit Florida after House speaker sued for details

Boutique stays in Tel Aviv

For decades, the tourist landscape in Tel Aviv was dominated by mediocre beachfront hotels. Over the last several years, beautiful boutique properties have changed the city's hospitality scene and contributed to Tel Aviv's increasingly chic image. These accommodations are sleeker, smaller and often-affordable. **SARAH TRELEAVEN/FOR METRO**

MIDTOWN

Brown Beach House

This property is perfect for visitors looking for a hip and affordable small beachside hotel in an increasingly sophisticated part of the city. The giant neon pink flamingo out front and the sunny yellow furnishings set a playful tone. Some rooms have enormous ocean-facing balconies, and all have bright yellow or blue accents. The neighbourhood is ideal for exploring both the south of the city (hipper) and the north (more polished).

ALLENBY AND ROTHSCHILD

Hotel Montefiore

The original boutique beachhead is the Montefiore, which opened in 2008 and sits on a quiet side street. The Montefiore is all grace and discretion. The lobby restaurant — a fusion menu offering terrific pork and cabbage gyoza and wonderfully rich truffled goat cheese ravioli — is full of palm fronds and Art Deco light fixtures. The hotel's bedrooms are equally elegant, and in-room libraries offer a great selection of authors.

STEPS FROM ROTHSCHILD BOULEVARD

The Norman

The Norman is comprised of two 1920s buildings that still retain their original grandeur. The palette of creams and soft greys is complemented by Bauhaus and Art Deco touches. This 50-room hotel serves Mediterranean and Japanese cuisine, and showcases work by Israeli artists. Further cultural enrichment is provided through bespoke tours, including food tours of the Carmel Market and historic perspectives on Jaffa.

CENTRAL TEL AVIV

The Poli House

Canadian Karim Rashid is the designer responsible for The Poli House – the high-design (pod chairs, neon) new property that opened its doors in November. This stunning boutique hotel was carved out of a 1934 Bauhaus wonder in central Tel Aviv, and is the product of a three-year modernization process that remained loyal to the building's heritage. The focus of this 40-room property is a massive panoramic rooftop space with an infinity pool, cocktail bar and tapas menu. There's also a ground floor "cultural centre," complete with gallery space and design bookstore.

5 HOTTEST DESTINATIONS FOR TRAVEL IN 2017

Want to travel in the new year, but still not sure exactly where you're headed? Perhaps this list can help. From the in-your backyard destinations to the far, far away, here are some of the world's must-see destinations in 2017.

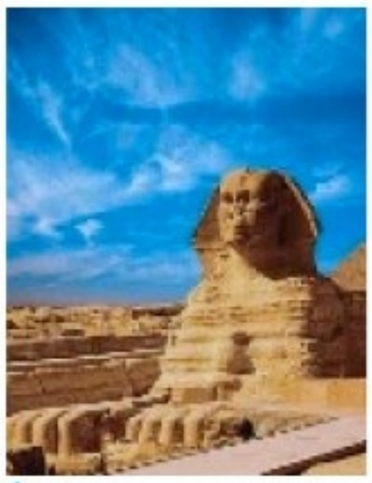
LOREN CHRISTIE/FOR METRO

1 Portugal

Due to cheap hotel rates and mouth-watering cuisine Portugal has risen to the top of many travellers' lists. Air Transat is increasing its direct flight service from Montreal and Toronto to both Porto and Lisbon and Air Canada Rouge is adding new flights to the Portuguese capital in summer 2017. For foodies, Exodus Travels has launched a collection of guilt-free vacations for people who want to hike, eat and drink their way through Portugal's Douro Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its award-winning wine.

2 Iceland

Thanks to its' stunning and varied natural beauty and a series of viral ad campaigns Iceland continues to be a top draw. Research by youth travel operator Contiki has revealed that the most desired travel experience for 18-35 year olds in Canada is to bathe in Iceland's famous Blue Lagoon.



3 Egypt

G Adventures reports an eight percent increase in travellers year over year heading to Egypt. Although numbers aren't what they were pre-revolution, it's a great time to visit some of the world's most historic monuments while avoiding the crowds and helping this former tourism giant get back on its feet.

4 Cambodia

A recent survey by Booking.com ranks Cambodia as a top pick for 2017. The recent discovery of an ancient city below the stunning temple complex of Angkor Wat has further heightened interest among Canadians. Before you go check out First They Killed My Father, a biography about the Cambodian genocide.

5 Canada

With the 150th anniversary of Confederation taking place there's never been a better time to explore at home. The epicentre of action will be the nation's capital with more than 150 events planned, but there will be plenty going on elsewhere, with national parks waving entrance fees and Montreal celebrating its 375th.

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Puerto Plata, D.R.
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+466 taxes (SWG)

Riu Jalisco ★★★★plus
Riviera Nayarit, Mexico
Jan 07, 2017
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$785
+472 taxes (SWG)

Royalton Cayo Santa Maria ★★★★★
Cayo Santa Maria, Cuba
Jan 03, 2017
7 Nights • All Inclusive
$1415
+380 taxes (SWG)

Royalton Riviera Cancun Resort and Spa ★★★★★
Riviera Maya, Mexico
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metro SPORTS

Christine Sinclair has been named Canada's women's soccer player of the year for the 13th time in 17 years

Messier blown away by Jagr's longevity

NHL

Czech player poised to become 2nd in all-time points

Panthers right-winger Jaromir Jagr had 1,883 NHL points over his career heading into action on Thursday night. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

44

Jagr's age. He turns 45 on Feb. 15.

Whether as a flashy rising star or as a battle-tested veteran, Jaromir Jagr has impressed NHL legend Mark Messier for more than a quarter century.

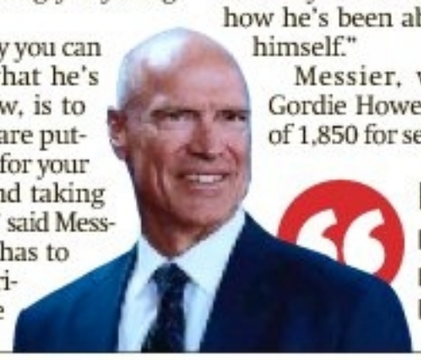
"When (Jagr) came into Pittsburgh he dazzled us with his power and his skill and his overall game," said Messier. "Later on in his career he's kind of inspired us with his passion and dedication.

"He's played long enough to understand what the game means to him as a person and as a player."

Poised to be overtaken by the 44-year-old Jagr for second on the NHL's all-time points list, Messier reflected Thursday about the Czech superstar's accomplishment in what has become increasingly a young man's game.

"The only way you can play, and do what he's doing right now, is to make sure you are putting in the time for your conditioning and taking care of yourself," said Messier. "The game has to be the No. 1 priority in your life because it takes a lot of time to prepare each and every game, let alone each and every season.

"You've got to give Jaromir a lot of credit for what he's been able to do early in his career, and then maybe even more credit for how he's been able to sustain himself."



Messier, who passed Gordie Howe's point total of 1,850 for second all-time in his final NHL season back in 2003-04, finished his career with 1,887 points. Jagr grabbed third place from Howe in March and sat at 1,883 points heading into Thursday's game between his Florida Panthers and the Winnipeg Jets.

Wayne Gretzky's all-time mark of 2,857 points isn't going to be equalled by Jagr, or likely anyone else for that matter.

> **In my own mind he surpassed me a long time ago.**
> Mark Messier on Jaromir Jagr approaching his NHL points total

Jagr joined the Pittsburgh Penguins in 1990 and won two Stanley Cups alongside Lemieux. He has gone onto play for seven more NHL franchises, but also spent three seasons in the KHL where he amassed 146 points.

Messier scored his 1,887 points in 1,756 NHL games, while Jagr has suited up 1,659 times in North America.

"This is kind of anticlimactic for me in a way," said Messier. "I understand the amount of time he put in overseas.

"In my own mind he surpassed me a long time ago."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

HOCKEY

Canadian juniors low on star power

Dylan Strome GETTY IMAGES

Without an obvious star player to carry the pressure and expectations, Canada's team for the world junior hockey championship will be all about teamwork, speed and desire.

The final 22-man roster that emerged from this week's four-day selection camp in Boisbriand, Que., is deep in very good players, such as 2015 third overall NHL draft pick Dylan Strome and Ontario Hockey League scoring leader Taylor Raddysh, but doesn't have a Connor McDavid or a John Tavares to claim the spotlight.

"We want to be a complete team," said coach Dominique Ducharme, the Drummondville Voltigeurs coach and general manager who led the Halifax Mooseheads to the 2013 Memorial Cup. "We've got speed, skill.

"We're reliable. We can defend. We're good at putting pressure on the other team. We want to put all that together."

The heat will be on Canada after a quarter-final elimination from last year's world junior event by host Finland.

And this year the stakes may be higher in Montreal and Toronto, where Canada won gold in two years ago. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Major League Soccer plans to expand to 28 teams

Major League Soccer commissioner Don Garber announced plans Thursday for the league's expansion to 28 teams, including a deadline for owners to apply and a new franchise fee.

The fee for the two teams expected to be granted next year is jumping to $150 million. Garber also set a Jan. 31, 2017, deadline for interested potential owners or ownership groups to apply.

The league recently expanded to 22 teams.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA sideline reporter Sager dies at 65

Craig Sager, the longtime NBA sideline reporter famous for his flashy suits and probing questions, has died after a battle with cancer, Turner Sports announced Thursday. He was 65.

Turner president David Levy said in a statement Thursday that Sager had died, without saying when or where. Sager worked basketball games for TNT for nearly a quarter-century. He had a third bone marrow transplant in August to fight an aggressive form of leukemia. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Satisfying Avocado, Lettuce and Tomato sandwich

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Forget the bacon because you don't need it! Ok, don't give us that side-eye because the ALT is as satisfying as your diner classic thanks to sweet basil. Trust us.

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Prep time: 5 minutes
Serves 2

Ingredients
4 basil leaves, torn
1/2 avocado, pitted and mashed
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 tomato
1 teaspoon olive oil
1/2 a head of Boston bibb lettuce
4 pieces of multi grain bread, toasted
sea salt

Directions

1. Cut tomato and lay out on a plate. Coat with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt. Let stand.

2. Meanwhile, mash avocado in a medium bowl and then add lemon juice and torn basil. Mix until smooth.

3. Toast bread and then smear about a tablespoon and a half of the avocado spread onto the bread. Finish by adding tomato slices and a few pieces of lettuce.

4. Cut in half or in quarters and serve with some cucumber slices.

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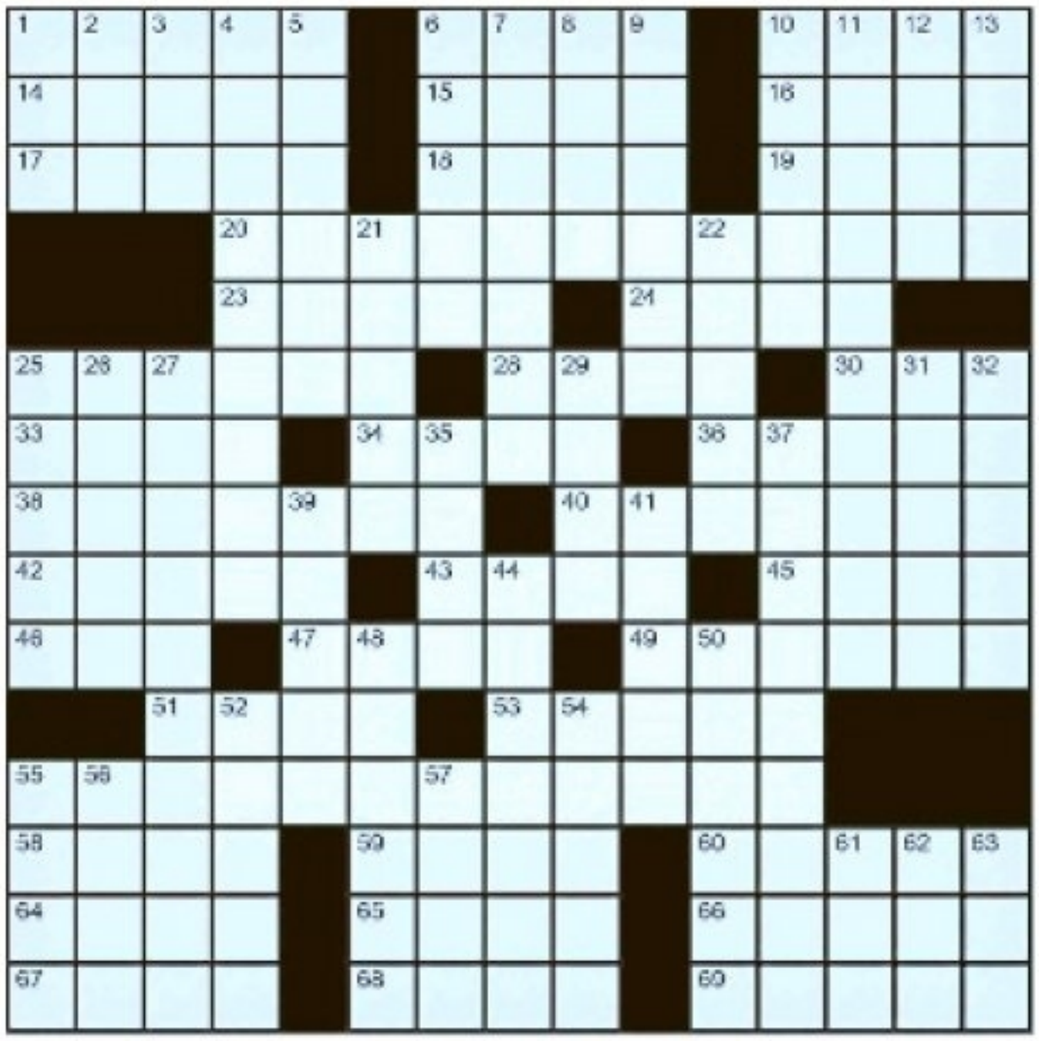
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Australian actor Mr. Bana's
6. "Sure __ standing here..."
10. Ladies
14. "Well, obviously, Sherlock!": 2 wds.
15. Ms. Rowlands of "The Notebook" (2004)
16. Prefix to 'matic'
17. Mouthwash brand
18. Car rental company
19. River of Russia
20. Make the best of a fierce Winter day all bundled up in a toque, scarf and mittens: 3 wds.
23. "Do you have a pencil __ I can burrow?"
24. All square
25. King Arthur's nephew Knight
28. Julie Harris' role in "East of Eden" (1955)
30. Initials-sharers of Emilio Estevez's actor brother
33. Roman love god
34. "Sesame Street" character
36. Stage stuff
38. Ontario town; or, Ms. Lohan
40. Maneuvered the motor vehicle
42. "Then...?": 2 wds.
43. Wealthy
45. Canvas for a survey
46. Check/determine
47. Starring role
49. Housing market
51. Staircase support
53. __ glue
55. #27-Down's answer is a what?: 2 wds.
58. Slightly open
59. Ballerina's garb
60. Apollo, for one
64. Blight
65. Util. bill
66. Bestow with a trait
67. Comedian Mr. Caesar's
68. Office table
69. Pre-weddings parties

DOWN
1. N nn N and N and n
2. Bird of myth
3. Nuptials vow: 2 wds.
4. Dishes/glasses storage areas
5. TV personality Ms. Shepherd
6. Tequila plant source
7. Time to catch the early train during the work week, e.g.: 2 wds.
8. "Put a sock __!"
9. Utensil for preparing potatoes
10. Soya __
11. Canadian song on #27-Down: 2 wds.
12. And others, for short: 2 wds.
13. Purchased, in another word
21. Sleeping problem
22. Sidestep
25. Posh parties
26. "Oh My Darling, Clementine" part: "... excavating for __..."
27. Sarah McLachlan's new release featuring classic Christmas tunes
29. Pear variety
31. Extract metal from ore
32. Woefully
35. Vega constellation
37. Quittance
39. Strong
41. Ache a lot
44. Conceptualizes
48. Joyful
50. Projects positivity, perhaps
52. Buenos __ (Capital of Argentina)
54. __ the guitar strings
55. Montreal hockey players, to fans
56. Bionic Woman's hometown in California
57. Candy canes time
61. Mount __ (Peak of Crete)
62. __-of-war
63. Greenlight reply

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Grab every chance to travel, because you need a change of scenery. Likewise, you will love to learn something new if you take a course or study something unusual.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You can make headway clearing up loose details about shared property, inheritances, taxes and debt. Just roll up your sleeves and dig in. Now is the time!

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You can learn a lot about your style of relating to friends, spouses and partners at this time. Observe your style of dealing with those who are closest to you.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You have a lot of stuff, and anything you do to help you feel better organized is a good thing. What can you do today to make your life run more smoothly?

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You want to play and take time off from drudgery, even if it's just catching a game or going out for dinner or seeing a movie. You need some fun!

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Because you will likely earn more money soon, this is a good time to think about how you can make home repairs. You also might be focused on a parent more than usual.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is a busy time for you, because short trips, reading, writing and talking to everyone will keep you on the go. Enjoy this accelerated pace.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
It's important to know what your money scene is. How much do you own? How much do you make? How much do you owe? Information is power.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Make the most of this time with three planets are in your sign. It's easy to attract positive situations now, which means you can come out on top.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You might want to hide for a few days, because you're not ready to step out into the world. When your birthday arrives, things will be different.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Enjoy your popularity with others now. Probably more than any other sign in the zodiac, friendships mean a lot to you.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Because you look so good to bosses and VIPs, use this time to go after what you want. Promote your own agenda. Speak up.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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	2			5		6		
			7					

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2	1	4	3	9	7	6	5	8
7	3	5	6	4	8	1	9	2
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